

Nova Scotia Thanks Boston At Annual Tree Lighting

Tourism, Culture and Heritage

News Releases

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The international and American spotlight on Halifax this week will help to promote tourism in Nova Scotia said Rodney MacDonald, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

Tonight, Dec. 2, a day after U.S. President George Bush's historic visit to Halifax, a 46-foot Christmas tree from Nova Scotia will light up the Boston Common. The tree is a gift to the people of Boston for their help following the Halifax Explosion in 1917.

"Halifax and Nova Scotia are top of mind for many Americans this week," said Mr. MacDonald. "The Northeastern U.S. is an important tourism market for Nova Scotia. We are using this year's tree lighting to increase awareness about our strong historical ties, and encourage Americans to visit their friendly neighbours to the north."

During tonight's ceremony, Bostonians will be reminded about of the reason behind the annual tree lighting and invited to visit Nova Scotia.

The result of a wartime collision between two ships in the harbour, the Halifax Explosion killed and seriously injured thousands of people and left many more homeless. Among the first to respond were the people of Massachusetts, who sent a complete relief expedition.

The province wants to ensure the special friendship Nova Scotia began with Massachusetts in 1917 continues to live on through the next generation. It has donated 350 copies of the award-winning children's book, *Survivors -- Children of the Halifax Explosion*, to the Boston Public Library.

"Nearly 87 years after the Halifax Explosion, Nova Scotians still remember the kindness of the residents of Massachusetts and treasure our close ties," said Finance Minister Peter Christie, who represented the province at the tree lighting. "We want the next generation to understand that we give Boston a Christmas tree every year as a show of our gratitude and friendship."

The 32nd annual Boston tree lighting ceremony will take place at the Boston Common tonight from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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Mr. MacDonald says the province will use the tree lighting to increase awareness about historical ties between Nova Scotia and Massachusetts, and encourage Americans to visit their friendly neighbours to the north.

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